

Character Builder 您好嗎？

The basic unit of the Chinese language is the *zi* (字), i.e. a Chinese word. Each *zi* has a written form (called a character, made up of strokes), a sound (made up of consonant and vowel) and a meaning (or multiple meanings). When we speak or write Chinese, we string *zi* together to form terms, phrases and sentences.

This week: Words about myths and legends

拜

Pronunciation: *bai* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *baai* (Cantonese, 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: worship

Religious followers 信教 (*xin jiao* = believe/faith~religion), 拜神 (*bai shen* = worship~gods/spirits). Chinese people 敬拜 (*jing bai* = respect/adore~worship) Confucius, 禮佛 (*li fo* = respect/rituals~Buddha = worship Buddha), 拜菩薩 (*bai pu sa* = worship~bodhisattvas). Ancient Persians followed 拜火教 (*bai huo jiao* = worship~fire~religion = Zoroastrianism). Muslims 跪拜 (*gui bai* = kneel~worship) in mosques, worship 安拉 (*An La* = Allah).

Catholics meditate the Passion of Christ by 拜苦路 (*bai ku lu* = worship~bitter/suffering~road = spiritual pilgrimage of the Stations of the Cross), 守禮拜 (*shou li bai* = keep~ritual~worship = attend church service).

Mercenary-minded people 拜金 (*bai jin* = worship~gold/money). Nazis 盲目崇拜 (*mang mu cong bai* = blind-eye~elevate~worship = blindly worship) Hitler.

by Diana Yue